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For Immediate Release  
September 9, 2004

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## **Kalamazoo area to benefit from DLEG budget**

**LANSING** – Following months of debate, the Legislature today has passed the budget for the Department of Labor and Economic Growth, including in it \$30 million for life sciences research, said Sen. Tom George, R-Texas Township.

“This budget bill is a plus for the Kalamazoo area,” George said. “It increases funding for life sciences research, gives Western Michigan University a permanent seat on the life sciences steering committee and increases much needed funding for fire safety grants.”

The conference report doubled the governor’s recommended \$15 million in life sciences research funding. By removing the sunset date, HB 5521 also gives Western Michigan University a permanent seat on the life sciences steering committee.

“It is fitting that this year is the 50th anniversary of the first trials of the Salk polio vaccine,” George said. “That vaccine demonstrated the benefits of life sciences research. How much more money would we have needed for Medicaid had it not been invented? The life sciences play a large part in the quality of Michigan’s future. I firmly believe that by investing now we are guaranteeing a better quality of life for ourselves and most importantly for our children.”

The DLEG budget also nearly doubles the fire safety grant funding to \$7.2 million. This funding goes to cities like Kalamazoo that provide fire protection for state institutions.

The bill now goes to the governor for her signature.

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